

Brandon Energy Committee Meeting
March 7, 2019

Committee Members Present: Michael Shank, Jack Schneider, Lowell Rasmussen, Edna Sutton

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to approve the agenda. **The motion passed.**

3. Approval of Minutes

January 7, 2019 Meeting:

A motion was made by Edna Sutton to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2019 Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed.**

4. Review Buildings in Brandon (LEDs, Solar Opportunities)

Michael Shank reported he has forwarded an article to the Select Board and Town Manager to request the Town do the same as Dorset with regard to energy use and bench marking. It shows savings, which should be a good incentive. It would require the Town to commit and avail town records. Mr. Shank also asked the Town to encourage efficiency in new building stock. The Zoning Administrator currently provides applicants information in their packet. It was noted the Brandon Library's Board had inquired as to whether the Energy Committee had expertise in efficiency audits. It was suggested Efficiency Vermont would be a good source for this type of an audit. Lowell Rasmussen suggested the Library Committee consult with Naylor-Breen, who is doing the architectural work, as to what energy efficiencies they are doing and then see what might be easy to add to the project. Mr. Shank will speak with the Library to advise that the Energy Committee would be interested in meeting with Naylor-Breen and Efficiency Vermont, if the Library were agreeable. Edna Sutton suggested the Library obtain advise from Efficiency Vermont and turn that over to Naylor-Breen. Ms. Sutton noted this process should not only be done for public buildings, but also businesses. Mr. Shank stated the Library staff are welcoming to this subject and noted it would be a good educational opportunity, as there are many people that visit the Brandon Library. Mr. Shank will emphasize the idea to promote/feature the Library as a role model/case study. Jack Schneider advised the upgrades to the Library are through a fund-raising effort, as there is not a budget for the project.

5. Update on Workshop Ideas

Michael Shank questioned whether the Committee would like to host an Efficiency Fair. All agreed and Mr. Shank offered to organize the event. There was a suggestion a fair be hosted at the Brandon Library. Mr. Shank will invite Grass Roots Solar, Green Earth Energy and Sun Commons to provide information concerning solar. Jack Schneider suggested inviting Green Mountain Power. Lowell Rasmussen suggested it should be determined if there is any current legislation that would affect solar. Mr. Shank will contact Bill Moore, Recreation Director, to determine if an Efficiency Fair could be dovetailed with a Rec Department event. Mr. Shank will also contact the installers to determine if there is an interest to participate in a fair. Mr. Shank will update the Planning Commission on the event. Mr. Schneider will contact the Heat Squad people to determine if they are interested in participating in an Efficiency Fair.

6. Review Community-Wide Survey Plan (View Shed Ranking, Energy Audit)

Michael Shank advised there had been discussion of doing a community-wide survey concerning view-shed rankings and energy audits to determine what the community is doing. Mr. Shank has reached out to the Town Manager to obtain the protocol for doing a community-wide survey. The Energy Committee will work on questions for a survey and a Google Doc will be developed for the view-shed rankings. Edna Sutton suggested doing two separate surveys on these topics. The view-shed survey would assist with finding the top 10 to 20 view sheds in Town that people would like to protect from development. If the Select Board is in agreement with the view sheds, this information could be added to the Town Plan. An Energy Audit survey would assist with directing the Energy Committee's efforts going forward. There could be services and workshops scheduled accordingly to orient the Committee's work. Jack Schneider advised there are many rebate offers available, such as for pellet stoves and heat pumps, and it would be good to provide this type of information to the public. Mr. Shank suggested there could be a monthly overview placed on Front Porch Forum and the Chamber Newsletter to provide links for the rebates on energy efficiency items. Mr. Shank will develop language and share with the Committee for approval.

7. Update on Energy Plan Process

Michael Shank reported the RRPC will be meeting on March 29th to review Brandon's proposed Energy Plan as their first review since the Regional Plan was approved. Mr. Shank advised the Energy Plan will not be sent to the Select Board until the maps are updated. Mr. Shank noted Barbara Noyes-Pulling feels good about the Plan and it will move forward with a slight delay due to the maps.

8. Old/New Business

Jack Schneider reported Stephanie Jerome and Butch Shaw are working on legislation for the PUC to have more flexibility to allow towns to move projects to a preferred site.

A discussion was held concerning EV (Electric Vehicle) grants. Michael Shank advised there are three charging stations in the plan for the parking area behind the Mobil Station. Mr. Shank will contact Dave Atherton and Bernie Carr regarding the grant cycle. It was noted that the charging stations would have a cost to the user. Middlebury and Rutland currently have charging stations, but there are none currently in Brandon. It was suggested electric car usage could be added to the survey. Mr. Shank will also email the Brandon Inn regarding the grant availability.

Mr. Shank advised that Sun Commons has asked for suggestions of organizations in Town that would be interested in off-taker electricity credits.

8. Next Meeting

Monday, April 1, 2019 @ 5:00PM in the Brandon Town Office

9. Adjournment

The Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:42PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary